
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 November 2025

by **H Marriott MPlan MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/W/25/3372169

111 Hawthorn Road, Woking, Surrey GU22 0BG

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant [outline] planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Lisa Canning against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is PLAN/2025/0237.
 - The development proposed is for the erection of bungalow to rear garden of 111 Hawthorn Road.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, including trees;
 - whether or not the site would be a suitable location for the proposed development, having regard to the risk of flooding; and
 - the effect of the proposed development on the integrity of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBSPA).

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. Hawthorn Road is a gently curving residential street characterised by frequent grass verges and a mix of property types, including two-storey terraces and semi-detached houses and bungalows, typically set behind modest front gardens and driveways. Some dwellings are visually distinct due to their arrangement around small pockets of open space, including a group of terraced bungalows adjacent to No 111. Where dwellings are not arranged around open spaces, they generally have long rear gardens, often containing sheds and outbuildings. External surfaces are mainly red brick with tiled roofs, with occasional hanging tiles. Although some dwellings have been altered or extended, the street retains a cohesive character and appearance, defined by its consistent materials, regular plot rhythm and spacing between buildings.
4. The appeal site is located to the rear of 111 Hawthorn Road (No 111), with additional access available via Slapleys track at the back of the site. It currently forms part of the long and narrow rear garden of No 111 and is enclosed by close-boarded fencing. Mature trees adjacent to Slapleys track are visible in views

from parts of Hawthorn Road, providing a verdant backdrop. The site is comparable in size to many rear gardens of dwellings with a similar relationship to Hawthorn Road, and its open qualities, together with the greenery of its setting, make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the locality.

5. The backland position of the proposed bungalow means that it would be partially screened from Hawthorn Road by the existing dwelling. However, even though it would be single storey and utilise materials to reflect the local vernacular, it would not reflect the form or scale of an ancillary garden structure typically found within rear gardens in the area and would likely be visible in glimpsed views from the street. Its presence would be further emphasised by the creation of a separate access to the front and side of No 111 and the erection of a dividing fence, with limited space remaining to allow for meaningful landscape planting to soften the appearance of the proposal. The bungalow would also be appreciable from neighbouring properties. Although there are similarly scaled bungalows adjacent to the site, the detached bungalow would appear visually distinct from this grouping. The subdivision of the long, narrow rear garden horizontally would be at odds with the prevailing linear form and pattern of development fronting Hawthorn Road and would present a stark contrast to the existing open qualities of the appeal site.
6. One of the mature trees located adjacent to Slapleys track is located within a neighbouring garden and I observed during my site visit that its crown overhangs the appeal site close to the rear of the proposed dwelling and its patio area. Another mature tree, situated within the rear garden of a neighbouring bungalow, lies adjacent to the proposed access. In the absence of a tree survey and impact assessment, it is not possible to conclude that these trees would not unintentionally be harmed. It would not be appropriate to require the submission of such information by condition, as any recommendations arising from an assessment could have implications for the design of the appeal proposal.
7. I conclude that the proposed development would result in an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area, and it has not been demonstrated that there would be no adverse effect on trees. In this regard, the proposal would conflict with Policies CS21 and CS24 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012) (CS) and Policies DM2 and DM10 of the Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (2016) (DPD) which amongst other things, require new development to respect and make a positive contribution to the area in which they are situated, to incorporate landscaping to enhance the setting of the development and to require adequate spacing and protection of trees to avoid damage.
8. For the same reasons, the appeal proposal would conflict with the Framework, notably paragraphs 129 d) and 135 c), which support development that maintains an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens); and seeks to ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character. There would also be conflict with guidance contained in the Woking Design SPD (2015), which requires the existing pattern of plot subdivision, building form and footprint to be respected.
9. While the Council's decision refers to Policy CS18 of the CS, this relates to transport and accessibility and, this particular policy is not determinative in this case.

Flooding

10. The Council's appeal statement refers to updated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)¹, which clarifies the application of paragraph 175 of the Framework in relation to the sequential test. The guidance confirms that a proportionate approach should be taken. Where a site-specific flood risk assessment (FRA) demonstrates clearly that the proposed layout, design, and mitigation measures would ensure that occupiers and users would remain safe from current and future surface water flood risk for the lifetime of the development, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, then the sequential test need not be applied.
11. The Council advises that the majority of the appeal site lies on land identified at medium risk of surface water flooding, and that access and egress would rely on routes passing through areas at high risk of surface water flooding. While the appellant's Design and Access Statement proposes rainwater harvesting and water butts, the Lead Local Flood Authority advises that further information would be required to demonstrate how surface water would be effectively managed. In the absence of a site-specific FRA or drainage strategy providing robust evidence to the contrary, I am not satisfied that the proposal would comply with the requirements of the Framework. On this basis, it would not be reasonable to secure the provision of further details through a planning condition, as again any recommendations arising from such an assessment could have implications for the design of the proposal. Therefore, having regard to the updated PPG, it has not been demonstrated that a sequential approach to surface water flood risk is not necessary in this case.
12. I conclude that it has not been demonstrated that the site would be a suitable location for the proposed development, having regard to the risk of flooding. In this regard, the proposal would conflict with Policy CS9 of the CS which among other things seeks to ensure that planning applications reduce the risk from surface water flooding.

Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA)

13. The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) is a European Site designated for its habitat supporting internationally important ground-nesting bird species, including nightjars, woodlarks and Dartford Warblers. The appeal site lies within 5km of the SPA and it has been established that residential development within this zone is likely to cause harm to the protected area through increased recreational disturbance. As the proposal is for an additional dwelling, and when considered in combination with other developments, it would be likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of the SPA.
14. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, requires that where a project is likely to have a significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, the competent authority must before any grant of planning permission undertake an Appropriate Assessment (AA). However, regulation 63(1) indicates that this requirement only arises where the competent authority is minded to give consent for the proposal.
15. Notwithstanding the above, Policy CS8 of the CS requires new residential development beyond a 400m threshold, but within 5km of the SPA to make an

¹ Paragraph: 027 Reference ID: 7-027-20220825 of Flood risk and coastal change – Gov.UK updated 17 September 2025

appropriate contribution towards mitigation. This includes a financial payment for Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM). In this case, there is no Section 106 agreement before me to secure the required contribution, and this is not a matter that can be addressed by planning condition.

16. Therefore, for the reasons set out it has not been demonstrated that the proposed development would not adversely effect the integrity of European habitat sites. In this regard, the proposal would conflict with saved Policy NRM6 of The South East Plan (2009) and Policies CS8 and CS17 of the CS which require new residential development likely to have a significant effect on the ecological integrity of the SPA to demonstrate that adequate measures have been put in place to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse effects.

Other Matters

17. The appellant has referred to other developments in the area, including extensions and new dwellings at 122/122a and 120/120a Hawthorn Road². While these plots may have resulted in narrow gardens, I do not know the full planning circumstances behind those examples. Moreover, none of the examples are identical to the appeal proposal in terms of their resultant design. In any event, I have assessed the appeal proposal on its own merits and in the context of its specific site. These examples therefore do not alter my conclusions on the main issues.
18. The Council has found the appeal proposal to be acceptable in all the other respects, including in relation to living conditions, ecology, parking and highway safety. Based on the evidence before me, I have no reason to reach a different view. However, these are neutral matters, which do not alter my findings on the main issues.

Conclusion

19. The proposal would make a modest contribution to the Borough's housing supply through the provision of one additional dwelling, making efficient use of the land in an area close to transport links and local amenities. The dwelling would be high quality, energy efficient and constructed to high sustainability and accessibility standards, including provision for those with mobility impairments, as well as cycle storage. However, these factors, both individually and collectively, do not outweigh the conflicts I have identified with the development plan, to which I afford significant weight.
20. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

H Marriott

INSPECTOR

² Council ref: PLAN/2012/1058 and Council ref: PLAN/2011/0915